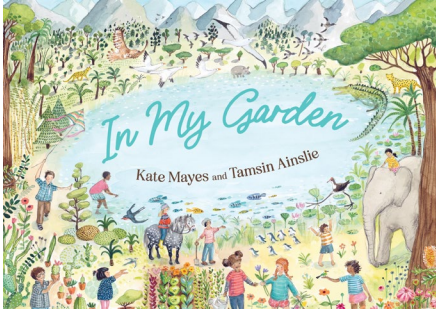


Classroom Resources



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In My Garden

Kate Mayes and Tamsin Ainslie

BOOK SUMMARY

Bestselling duo Kate Mayes and Tamsin Ainslie return with a journey through a variety of children's gardens around the world.

*In our gardens are where we belong.
Planting, watching, growing, dreaming.
In our gardens something out of nothing comes.*

Join children from around the world as they share their gardens, from blossoming flowers in Japan to the waterside of Malawi, the frozen landscape of Iceland to the bush tracks of Australia. These are the places they love and the places they belong. With uplifting lyrical words and stunning detailed pictures from bestselling duo, Kate Mayes and Tamsin Ainslie.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ACELA1594
- ACELY1680
- ACSSU073
- ACHASSK069

THEMES

- Families
- Natural World
- Belonging

Recommended Reading Ages: 3+

Resources Created For: Middle Primary

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Before Reading

1. Ask students the question “What is a garden?” and then invite children to describe their own gardens/backyards/outdoor spaces, or for those who don’t have one what they would like to have in a garden.
 - a) What different kinds of gardens are there?
 - b) What might a garden have in it? Think of both living and non-living things.
 - c) What different purposes can a garden have?
2. What do students know about how climate affects the natural environment?
 - a) Revise or introduce students to the different types of climate.
 - b) What different kinds of plants and animals thrive in each type of climate?
3. As a class brainstorm how humans affect the natural environment.
 - a) In what positive ways can humans influence the environment?
 - b) What negative impacts can humans have on the environment?

During Reading

1. After you have read the book together, closely examine each double spread. What clues can students find about the country, the climate and life of each child and their garden?
 - a) Spread 1: bonsai, stone temple lanterns, koi fish, swallows, nightingale, water feature, cherry blossom, shaped/pruned trees, architecture (paper/wood frame of building)
 - b) Spread 2: cacti, adobe building, red-tailed hawk, coyote (call), desert, mountains, rocky outcrops, Joshua trees
 - c) Spread 3: large lake, mopane moth, baboons, elephants, hippos, cheetahs, palm, trees, orchids, canoes, rainbow fish, net fishing
 - d) Spread 4: ‘layers of woollen clothes’, snow/ice, Icelandic sheepdog/sheep/horses, bare trees, still and silent
 - e) Spread 5: ‘his people’s home for a thousand years’, Mānuka, Kānuka, Kōwhai, Kauri, snowy mountains, albatross, storm petrel, dolphins, fur seal
 - f) Spread 6: rooftop garden, ruined buildings and rubble, explosions/smoke in night sky, pinecone/Aleppo pine, crocuses, kite flying, ‘remembering’
 - g) Spread 7: stilt houses, houseboat, small boats, tropical jungle, mountains, lake, elephants, bamboo forests, bamboo orchids
 - h) Spread 8: spruce, pine, sugar maple, snow geese, brown bears, black bears, chickadees, wildflowers, forest, pond
 - i) Spread 9: Judas, cypress, agave trees, pomegranates, olives, scops owl, gecko, clear blue ocean (Mediterranean), ‘paradiso’, traditional villa-style buildings
 - j) Spread 10: ‘sprawling city’, high-density housing, community garden, vegetables and flowers, a ‘festival’
 - k) Spread 11: ‘long bush track’, kingfisher, Gouldian finch, dilly bag, brolgas, frogs, crocodiles, dragonflies, giant water lilies, comb-crested jacana, spear grass, silky oak, golden grevillea, billabong, frogs, Kudjewe (monsoon season), eggs in ‘nests above the waterline’

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2. Compare, contrast and discuss the differences and similarities between settings, plants, animals, climates.
 - a) Depending on students' level these could be represented as a Venn diagram or other diagrammatic template, e.g., gardens depicting the same type of environment.
3. At the end of the book we learn which country each child is from. Locate and plot these on a world map.
4. How does the illustrator use colour to convey the 'feel' of each landscape?
 - a) Select three spreads with quite different palettes, for example, Francisco, Freya and Violeta's gardens.
 - b) What do the different colours tell the reader about the natural and human-made environment?
 - c) Are there any colours all three have in common? Why is this?
 - d) Which, if any, colours, belong only to one spread?
 - (i) What does this tell us about that environment and the life of the child who lives in it?
5. Discuss how the use of figurative language assists the illustrations in making the garden of each child come alive.
 - a) Ask students to identify three examples of figurative language, preferably from different spreads.
 - b) What literary technique/s does each example use?
 - c) How do the words contribute to the illustrations to help the environment come alive?
6. The impact of humans on the natural environment can be seen in many of the spreads with houses, boats, fishing nets and fences all shown. However, Sami's spread presents two very different ideas of the impact people can have on their environment.
 - a) What is happening on the left side of the spread?
 - b) Discuss what students can see and imagine how the war affects Sami's life.
 - c) Are students surprised that Sami still lives in a place that is at war?
 - (i) Why might he still be there?
 - d) What do students know about the war in Syria?
 - e) The right side of the spread is very different. Why have the creators depicted these two contrasting gardens?

After Reading

1. Allow students to walk around their own school environment and make notes about the plants, animals and human impact they observe.
 - a) Students should create descriptions of these observations using figurative language.
 - b) Use this figurative language to write two stanzas of verse in the style of *In My Garden*.
 - c) Ask students to repeat this exercise for the outdoor space they have access to at home, or one they use regularly/is significant to them.
2. There are many bird and tree species mentioned in *In My Garden*. Allocate each spread to students and have them research the significance of these trees and birds in this country.
 - a) Students should prepare an A3 poster sharing their findings with the rest of the class.

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3. Individually or in pairs, allocate students countries not represented in *In My Garden*. Ask them to research the following aspects of this country:
 - The climate/s;
 - Plants and animals;
 - The lifestyle, including religion, special days/celebrations, industries and occupations, where and how people live;
 - Languages spoken;
 - Common names.
 - a) Based on their research, students should compose the words and illustrations for a new garden to appear in a follow-up to *In My Garden*.
4. In small groups or as a class, students plan a garden for their school. They will need to consider elements such as:
 - The purpose of their garden – food, beauty, sensory stimulation, relaxation;
 - The climate in which they live;
 - Native plants and animals;
 - Possible pets;
 - Water usage;
 - How much sun, shade and rain their garden would be exposed to;
 - The amount of space available.
 - a) In small groups, ask students to prepare a persuasive presentation to present to the rest of the school/principal/board (as appropriate to your students and school) to convince them to both allow the class to create the garden, and provide funds to enable the garden's creation.
 - b) This could then either be presented to the appropriate person or people, or to the class as appropriate.
 - c) As an alternative to creating an actual school garden, students could build models.

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About the Author and Illustrator

Kate Mayes is the bestselling author of the picture books *Daddy Cuddle* and *Mummy Cuddle* (illustrated by Sara Acton), *The Bum Book*, *The Christmas Bum Book* and *The Easter Bum Book* (illustrated by Andrew Joyner), *Count My Kisses*, *Little One* and *Count My Christmas Kisses* (illustrated by Tamsin Ainslie and written as Ruthie May), and *Stew a Cockatoo: My Aussie Cookbook* (illustrated by Leigh Hobbs and written as Ruthie May), and is a contributor in the children's poetry book *A Boat of Stars*. She lives in Sydney, Australia, and works in the book publishing industry.

Tamsin Ainslie is an illustrator living in Murwillumbah, Northern New South Wales, on a rambling, messy farm with her family and three dogs, two horses and an array of chickens and ducks that provide never-ending inspiration for drawing. She has illustrated more than fifty books, including *In My Garden* (with Kate Mayes), *Count My Kisses*, *Little One* and *Count My Christmas Kisses* (with Ruthie May). *The Sisters Saint-Claire* (with Carlie Gibson), *Collecting Sunshine* (with Rachel Flynn), *Sometimes Cake* (with Edwina Wyatt), *Grumble Boats* (with Susannah McFarlane) and *Can We Lick the Spoon Now?* (with Carol Goess) have all been CBCA Notable Books, with *Can We Lick the Spoon Now?* also winning the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Award for Young Children. Her paintings and drawings are held in collections all over the world.

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